

THE
WILTSHIRE
NEW PHENOMENON

OR, THE
FREE-THINKING

480. 6-6
10

Christian Philosopher:

BEING THE

Philosophical Essays

OF

Mr. CHARLES WHITE, Hostler,

At the *King's-Arms*, at SARUM,

On the following SUBJECTS, viz.

- I. *The* BEING and ATTRIBUTES of GOD.
- II. ACCIDENTS and COMETS.
- III. *The* RESURRECTION.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ROBINSON, at the *Golden-Lion*,
in *Ludgate-Street*, M.DCC.LII. (Price 6d.)

THE
WITNESS
NEW PHENOMENON

OF THE
FREE-THINKING
Christian Philosopher

BY
THE
Philosophical Essay

Mr. Charles W. Hooper

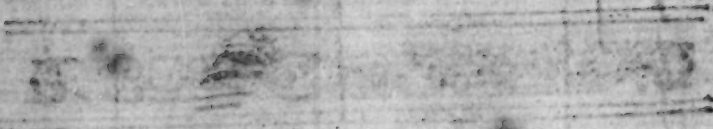
OF THE
NEW PHENOMENON

ON THE
SOLUTION OF THE

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE



LONDON

Printed by J. Richardson, at the
New Phenomenon, (No. 10)

.....

To the R E A D E R.

S I R,

As What is here presented is the natural Production of a Mind unembellish'd with scholastic Art, I rely on your Candour to excuse whatever you may find amiss; more especially as Truth and Sincerity (which are always acceptable to great Minds) will, I flatter myself, appear to have been my principal Aim, and that I have studied Nature, not Dress, Plainness, not Eloquence: As such, I leave it to your Perusal, and am,

Your most humble Servant,

CHARLES WHITE.

SARUM,

August 27, 1752.

.....

.....

To the READER

SIR,

As What is here presented is the natu-
ral Production of a Mind unembel-
lish'd with scholastic Art, I rely on
your Candour to excuse whatever
you may find amiss; more especially
as Truth and Sincerity (which are
always acceptable to great Minds)
will, I flatter myself, appear to have
been my principal Aim; and that I
have studied Nature, not Books,
Plainness, not Eloquence: As such,
I leave it to your Perusal, and am,

Your most humble Servant,

CHARLES WHITE.

LONDON,
August 27. 1752.

.....

Of the BEING and ATTRIBUTES of GOD.



DA I L Y experience demonstrates, that there is a *supreme, omnipotent, powerful Being*, the *first and great cause* of all existing matter, on *whose power* depends the whole motion of the universe. This *powerful Being* doth not owe his *being* to any cause whatsoever; neither did he ever *begin* to exist: For, if there was a time when *that Being* was in a state of *non-being*, or motionless nothing, *he* must of necessity have remained so still; except *he* owes *his* existence to some *cause*; and if so, *he* cannot be an *absolute, powerful, omnipotent Being*, but owes *his* existence to a cause superior to *himself*; but that is impossible, for where no *being* and *power* is, there can be no *cause* to give it existence. It is impossible for a thing to *be* and *not to be*. *Something* cannot be *nothing*; nor *nothing* cannot be *something*. *Nothing* multiplied by *nothing*, produceth *nothing*. So as I said before, if *GOD* was once in a state of *non-being*, *he* must of necessity have remain'd so still; and the consequence must be, there could be no supreme cause at all. So likewise, if there be a supreme cause, his *being* must certainly be *eternal*. This appears obvious to natural reason, except you will admit of that blind cause

B

chance;

chance; and if so, then by *chance* the *Deity* did begin to exist, and by *chance* *he* might not have existed. By chance *that Being* exists like to what *he* is; and by chance *he* might have existed quite of another Essence. By chance all things might have remain'd in the state of *non-being*, or by chance the whole face of things might be quite different to what they are. The man that now exists a *man* might by chance exist an *ass*, for that noble cause *chance* must have been very uncertain; and if by any power in *matter*, *matter* itself did exist, then every atom of *matter* is powerful in itself, and by that self-existing power gave itself being; but this is in itself very inconsistent and absurd, for as I said before, it is impossible for the same thing *to be*, and *not to be*; and that dead and insensible matter, once in the *non-state* of motionless nothing, could, by *chance*, or any *power* in itself, ever exist: No, of necessity it must have remain'd so still, if there had been *no cause* to give it existence.

Again, it appears very inconsistent to reason, and the nature of things, that in such an immense expanse of *space*, where *every atom* of *matter* has its respective free motion; I say, it appears inconsistent to reason, that by *chance*, or any power in *matter* itself, these small parts could so meet together, as to form so *beautiful* and *resplendent* an universe. Was it possible in so *immense* an *expanse* of *space*, that such an *infinite number* of systems and worlds should be so regular and uniform (each continuing its proper place, and every member and satellite thereof

thereof by due gradation performing its respective office) without jumbling together or juggling one another? Could *chance* or any *power* in *matter* perform such a work? I should as soon believe, that a numerous quantity of printers letters, cast from an eminence promiscuously, should by the *lot* of the fall become an excellent treatise of *Philosophy*.

Moreover, observe how justly all causes maintain and succeed each other; each *atom* of *matter* obeys its *just laws* received from its *great Author*; all nature justly rolls on in its *natural, unchangeable course*. How justly do all species of *animate* and *inanimate beings* and *things* propagate in their natural course? How wonderful are the causes and operations perform'd by motions of *insensible matter*, which it received from its *great Author*? How numerous are the different species of things, that exist from *one essence* of *matter*, in this small point of the universe which we inhabit, and how infinitely more must there be in the *immense creation*? Again, observe there appears to be *design* in every part, *every part* being directed to answer *some end*. This is plain in the frame and texture of every animal, each part of every individual being directed to answer some end. 'Tis evident the *eye* was made for *seeing*, and the *ear* for *hearing*, &c. Suppose *unintelligent matter* to have existed *eternally*, yet that could not of itself be productive of *design*, for without a designing *mind* unintelligent matter could not have disposed itself to answer any purpose, much less to answer those *great* and

noble designs which plainly appear to take place in *nature*. The more I contemplate the *works of creation*, the more I admire the wisdom of the *great Creator*, when I behold the different appearances between *each individual* of one sort of species, whereby we *distinguish* one from the other, even *see* amongst our *own species*; and notwithstanding we all naturally exist alike by one *general equal cause*, yet there is a different appearance between each individual, whereby we are capable of distinguishing the one from the other. This difference seems to proceed from the different position of *matter* in each *object* or *individual*, which differently affects the eye, whereby the mind *perceives*, and forms a judgment, by which we are enabled to maintain and vindicate our just rights and properties, and by the laws of society bring to justice the invaders thereof.

There are some men, who think *matter* eternal, yet do not deny the *power* and *being* of a *cause* its first mover to creation: but to me their opinion seems absurd, because the *natural essence* of *matter* seems to be such as *had a beginning*, and not an *eternal essence*. If there be a *cause*, as they grant, who was the *first mover* of *matter*, it is reasonable to think *that being* to be so omnipotent and powerful as to give it existence. I am of opinion, that *time* and *space* are *eternal*, but then their respective *natural essence* does not consist in *matter* or *motion* (which must of necessity depend on a *cause*) but on *motionless expanse* and *eternal duration*, whose natural essence is an evident demon-

demonstration of an impossibility of *beginning* or *ending*, but of this I shall treat hereafter.

To conclude, it appears plain to me, as I said before, that *matter* is not eternal, but did exist by the power of an *eternal cause*, who is the sole cause and source of *all existing matter*, who was the same before *matter* existed as now, who was absolutely free and powerful in *himself* to have let all things remain at rest in their *non-state* of *motionless nothing*, and who by an absolute freedom of *his own will* gave it existence. Some men say, how could GOD create *matter* out of *nothing*; the whole creation is made of *matter*, and how could GOD create *that substance* out of *nothing*? To which I answer, it is a point that as far exceeds our limited understanding as the *eternity of time* and the boundless *expanse of space*. Our *sight* is too short to *perceive* the one, and our *understanding* too narrow to *conceive* the other. But by all the order, harmony and beauty of the creation (as far as comes within our view) it is evident there must be an *eternal, supreme cause*, who is in himself one *unchangeable essence*, superior to all *matter* and *substance*, and whose *natural essence* consists of *infinite, boundless wisdom*, from whose unexhausted fountain *all matter exists*.

Having proved by natural reasoning, by circumstances drawn from the nature of things, the eternal existence of *the great author of nature*, who certainly is the sole cause and source of *all existing matter*, who was absolutely free and powerful in himself to have left all things
at

at rest in *non-being*, and who by *omnipotent power* and *will* in *himself* gave it existence, my intention is *now* to treat of, and prove by natural reason, the *attributes* and *perfections* of *so great a Being*, and wherein consists his wonderful and excellent design in causing a multitude of intelligent creatures to exist.

First, it appears demonstrable to natural reason, that the essence of this *great and powerful Being* is in itself *unchangeable*, *invariable* and *eternally equal*. Now the *natural essence* of this *great and powerful Being* must of necessity be *good*, or *bad*; as it appears plain to natural reason, that the *essence* of this *great Being* does not consist both of *good* and *bad*, for if his essence consists of *good* and *bad*, he cannot be a *good and unchangeable Being*; because consisting of two different natures, his natural essence must be subject to variation. So if his natural essence be unchangeable, which by all reasonable circumstances it is, *then* of necessity it is *good* or *bad*; and if *good*, then all his decrees and designs are good; if *bad*, then all his designs and eternal decrees are bad; and the consequence must be, that we are very miserable creatures: For notwithstanding his *natural essence* doth not consist of matter and substance, nor doth he in *himself* interpose like mortal corporiety, yet these are his *natural powers*, which by a power in *himself* naturally flow from his essence. So likewise it appears demonstrable to reason, that his *natural essence* must consist of *infinite wisdom*, or else he is inconsistent in himself, and all his works are
such;

such; and the consequence must be, that by a power in himself he caused a numerous multitude of sensitive species of *beings* to exist, insensible of the consequence, advantage, or disadvantage of life, and so left them to chance. But the contrary is evident, for if the *natural essence* of *that great Being* be such, as not to be justly touch'd with the feeling of created bodies, yet in the essence or power of his *infinite wisdom* he certainly fore-knew, and also doth know wherein consist the advantages and disadvantages of his creatures; or else (as I before observed) *that Being* is inconsistent in himself, and all his works are such.

Again, it appears demonstrable to reason, that notwithstanding the *natural essence* of *that Being* is in itself *unchangeable*, yet if he *will* he is powerful in *himself* to dispose *matter*, in such a manner *as he will in himself*, either to *good* or *evil*; and he was absolutely free and powerful in himself, to have caused it to exist to *what end soever he will'd*. Yet if God caused us to exist to *evil* or *misery*, or with any other design than to make us happy, he used a power inconsistent with his *attributes*, in calling us out of a state of *non-being*; for he caused us to exist by an absolute power in himself, independent of our own will or consent. We were insensible of it, neither had we *before our existence* any idea or notion of the advantages or disadvantages of life; nor was it in our power or choice to *exist*, or to *remain in non-existence*: So as I said before, if that *absolute powerful Being* caused us to exist, with any other

other design than to make us *happy*, he must have acted inconsistent with his *divine character*, and deprived us of the happy silent state of *non-being*: For notwithstanding the state of *non-being* cannot be a state of happiness, like to the state of social life or felicity, yet it is an *insensible state of rest*, which is preferable to *life in misery*. And as to the human species, and all species of beings, which are capable of enjoying the sense of feeling, even the minutest insect in the universe, if GOD caused them to exist with any other design but to enjoy *happiness* in their way of sensitive life, he used a power over them inconsistent with his *goodness*, to deprive them of the advantageous state of silent rest in *non-being*. But it appears demonstrable to reason and the nature of things, that *his wisdom was so equal to his designs*, that he has caused no species of beings to exist to a *disadvantageous state*: For the very state of *sensitive life* must in general be preferable to *insensible nothing*; because notwithstanding it is subject to *many pains and miseries* from many *natural and accidental causes*, yet in the common course of things, and from natural causes, there is an over-equivalent advantage on the *sensitive side*, which renders life preferable to a state of *non-being*. And whereas many of the brutal world have often suffer'd great afflictions from many different causes in nature, yet the *great Author of their being* has in part prevented such afflictions from depriving them of the advantageous state of *sensitive life*, by not giving them a *conscious feeling*

feeling of things past or to come. And notwithstanding many of the human species have often suffer'd great afflictions, which, by *the conscious feeling of the mind*, must of necessity have render'd life very miserable, which often happen from unavoidable and accidental causes in nature, yet those accidents, which the frame of nature seems subject to, are no reason that there is any imperfection in its *great Author*; for as *that great Being* must of necessity be a perfect one, whose absolute power in all his works could by no means be wanting in his great designs, and whose fore-knowledge of things to come must necessarily extend to all the seeming imperfections of the frame of nature, he by that perfection in himself has certainly decreed unknown causes to us, whereby he will contribute to the *conscious part* of intelligent beings an *over-equivalent of good* for the various diseases and the like, which many suffer from *these causes*. For from the *perfect proceedings* of *so great and good a Being* there can proceed no imperfection; and as causes justly succeed in nature, so some *greater good* will certainly succeed those imperfections the frame of nature is subject to; as *that great Being (the Author of nature)* consists of *unchangeable infinite goodness and wisdom*. And 'tis further plain, that all *good acts*, perform'd by the human species towards one another, in order to make life happy, must certainly be agreeable to what *God* design'd, and all *vicious acts* the contrary.



Of ACCIDENTS and COMETS.



Have before observed that calamities have fallen on many of the human species, as well as the brutal race, by *natural accidents*, which proceed not from any unequal dispensation of the *great Author of nature*, but meerly from *accidental causes*; for notwithstanding all *nature* pursues its natural end, nevertheless *matter* is subject to accidents, from whence deformities, &c. proceed; and besides that perceivable difference we discern in bodies either of the same or different species (which is certainly agreeable to the will of the *great designing mind*) there are *natural accidents*, proceeding from some *interruption* or *impulse*, which force matter out of its usual course, as it is pursuing its direct end. For the parts of matter easily and justly pursue their natural end, having a tendency by a coherent motion to unite in their just center, to form a body according to the *difference* of the parts, or the *different* power of *matter* in each part. So that *accidental* deformities in bodies do not proceed from the *natural* motion of matter itself, but from some *accidental*

tal cause, which interrupts in its due *course*; for if matter be forced out of its *natural* course to creation, of necessity there must exist some *odd form* thereform; as *matter* by its natural motion still continues to pursue some end to creation, and all causes in nature tend to generation, the parts of matter being first put in motion by some just impulse, that moves it to creation, which is perform'd by the insensible parts of *matter* acting differently on each other. There are some children that are *born* idiots; proceeding from *accidental causes*; and some grown bodies that are regularly form'd, in which afterwards *accidental* deformities begin to exist; proceeding from some *interfering cause*, that obstructs *matter* in its proper course; for in bodies in all times of life there is a continual, changeable, succeeding motion of *matter*, which is the cause that supports the body.

Again, as to accidental deaths, diseases and the like, there are merely such existing in *the course of nature*, for the fleeting matter of life is sometimes by some *interfering cause* obstructed in its regular chanel, from whence of necessity proceed great agitations of matter, and bodies sometimes unavoidably receive thereby such violent shocks, as to cause many accidental diseases and deaths. For the life of man may be compared to a candle, that is lighted; it is liable and subject to many *accidents*, and may be extinguish'd by *internal* as well as *external* causes; but, if not put out by *accident*, will spin out nature to its full length, in all proba-

bility free from those diseases the human body is subject to, which often cuts off the thread of life betimes; for the GOD of *nature* has stated a just time to nature in all bodies, from infancy to maturity, and from maturity to old age, in which *nature* has its just laws, which it would pursue, was it not for these *interfering accidents*: I do not mean that all bodies would last their stated time *alike*, for as bodies differ in constitution, &c. so some by a natural strength might last longer than others; but (as I said before) all bodies would continue to be in being *the full stated time of nature*: and as they gradually come into the world by a continual coherent motion of *matter*, so will they as naturally decay by a contrary motion or *separation of matter*. Moreover,

The *mind* is subject to these *natural accidents*, which proceed from some *violent impulse*, that forces it out of its natural position, thereby causing great confusion therein, and often-times having such an effect on the body, as to bring on death, distraction, or the like. The *sensitive* world are also subject to the same; and the vegetable likewise are in their nature not free from the force of *accidents*.

Again, by the *interfering of bodies* many *accidents* happen, as the force of insensible matter, wherein the elements of life consist, will sometimes *unavoidably cause them*; for when two objects strongly act on each other, the elements of life with great rapidity forceably lead to action.

There

There are, besides, other *accidents in nature*, such as *earthquakes, irruptions, &c.* which also proceed from some *interfering cause*, that obstructs nature in its just course, and causes great agitations in *matter*, for *matter*, pursuing different ends in nature, sometimes unavoidably intercepts one or other of its various intended purposes, and creates great and terrible confusion; like two rapid streams meeting, which of necessity must violently retard each other's course; or like two great bodies of a more condense nature that meet with great velocity, from whence *accidents* must occur to one or both of those bodies; for, as I before observed, *matter* is still pursuing its natural end, but if interrupted in its course, or different causes interfere, of necessity *accidents in nature* will exist, whereby many bodies animate and inanimate have been destroy'd, and whole cities, with their inhabitants, have been demolish'd. And it doth not seem improbable, as such *accidents* exist in this our *planet*, from the *smallest* thing to the *greatest*, that a planet may thus have been destroy'd, that is to say, by some strong *interfering power*, by which those bodies mutually act on each other. Or it may be, that *the first great Cause* might have decreed *natural changes* to these bodies, to work some just effect; and so these bodies render'd *naturally* subject to accident, like other lesser bodies; proceeding from causes in themselves, or from some strong *interfering power*, by which these bodies strongly act on one another, so as to occasion some growing defect in their elliptical motions, which
might

might at last cause such a body to fly out of its natural orbit, and a planet or world might be destroy'd. I say, 'tis probable, that in a long series of years, such an *accident* might happen, and it might as equally correspond to the time of their *natural duration* as the accidents of bodies of a more short duration, and the accidental loss of such a body, when compared with the *immense number* in space, might be no more in its nature than the loss of a body of more inconsiderable species. Tho' many of the ancients were of opinion, that these bodies were of *eternal duration*, and tho' it must be allow'd, that if *the great Author* had so decreed, the same cause that preserves their present state might have preserved them from their *first being* to *eternity*; yet it certainly appears from the nature of things, that *the great Being* has decreed them *natural changes*, like to other bodies. If it was possible for a short lived insect to have an idea of the life of man, like as we have of the duration of these celestial bodies, and such insect was capable of handing down to posterity its idea concerning the duration of such a body as *man*, in all probability its insect race would think of us as the ancients did of the celestial bodies, because in many succeeding ages there was no perceivable alteration; and it may be the ancients had no greater foundation than this for their opinion. For what is *the time of the life of man* compared to the duration of such a body! and the duration of such a body must be *far less* in comparison to *eternity*.

But

But suppose these bodies to be, as the ancients thought, of *eternal duration*, still they might have been subject to *accidents*, by which this system or any such might have wanted reparation; yet, as none of these accidents could be unperceivable to *the perfect fountain of infinite wisdom*, he has undoubtedly prevented any irreparable loss among these bodies, by some secret power in nature, or it may be by a continual creation in yonder space: For amongst the various accidents that we are surrounded with, what worlds upon worlds in miniature have been *accidentally* lost, and yet no irreparable diminution proceeded therefrom! Which are plain demonstrations, that although these accidents proceed from unavoidable causes in nature, yet being justly perceivable by the fore-knowledge of GOD, notwithstanding they appear great to us, they may not consist of any more defect (as to the shortning of the length of time to nature, or obstructing its course in its great *orb*) than the ascents and descents on the surface of the earth cause a deviation in its natural form, for there can be no defect in the works of *the great Author of nature*.

Various conjectures have arose among mankind concerning *comets*. The illustrious and incomparable Sir *Isaac Newton* by great application and study has endeavour'd to account for their courses and period, which, according to the rules laid down by him, will admit of much difficulty to object against; nevertheless some incertainties seem to me to arise, whether
these

these *comets* are *bodies* revolving in such *ellipses*, or have a *free motion* in *space*, the effect of some *natural accident*; for notwithstanding men by mathematical demonstration may *endeavour* to *calculate* how far such *bodies* may go into *space*, or what great *ellipses* they may revolve in, yet as the life of man is so short, comparatively speaking, to one revolution of these *comets*, according to Sir *Isaac's* own calculation, it appears almost an impossibility to *know* how far such *bodies* may go into *space*. By the most accurate *observation* of the *great comet* in the year 1680, when it was in its *perihelion*, or nearest the *sun*, its distance therefrom was four hundred ninety six thousand miles, and according to the same curious *observers*, when in its *aphelion*, or greatest distance from the *sun*, it must be distant therefrom twelve thousand millions of miles. These curious *observers* acknowledge, that they move in various directions, some in the same way with the planets, others the contrary; some of them performing the greatest part of their motion almost in right lines, tending in their approach to the *sun* almost directly towards it, and then marching off again directly in a right line, till they are out of sight. The *comet* above mention'd, according to the *said observation*, must take five hundred and seventy five years in once revolving round our *sun*; and whereas the life of man is so short, and the course of a *comet* so intricate, I say, with submission, it almost admits of an *impossibility* to account for it, according to the just laws of attraction and gravity, which

which keep these bodies *in equilibrio* in this orbits. For that same *equal cause*, that keeps a body in her just orbit, at so immense a distance as twelve thousand millions of miles, must, in my opinion, when that body is so near the *sun* as four hundred ninety-six thousand miles, which is almost two thousand four hundred and twenty times nearer, of necessity attract her into its body; or when such a body is so near the *sun*, and the *sun* so strongly interferes with her as to retard her course, and to extend its parts into her rarified expanded position, if such a body by the power of its own gravity go off from the *sun* into *space*, that same power of gravity, when such a body is gone off again at so immense a distance from the *sun*, and her parts again settled in a closer position, whereby it must still acquire a greater power of gravity, of necessity that same power of gravity that carried such a body off, when in such close conjunction with the *sun*; when, I say, such a body is gone so far into *space*, that same power of gravity of necessity must over-balance the attractive force, by which such a body must go off in a direct line into *space*, except obstructed by some other force: Which I leave to the consideration of the judicious reader.

As to the use of these *comets*, supposed to belong to the *solar system*, according to the nature of things it is almost an impossibility for such a body to be inhabited, for consisting of such great extremities of climates, it must thereby be render'd uninhabitable; for the same

sensitive being, that enjoys life in one climate, cannot, perhaps, exist one moment in another; which is demonstrable in the *world* or *body* which we inhabit; as those that are natives near the *equator* cannot live, but with the greatest difficulty, near the *poles*. And it appears somewhat inconsistent with the *wise proceedings* of the great *Author of nature*, to create such a great mass of matter, existing for so long a space of time, to little or no purpose, especially if we consider the frugal intent of nature in the creation of *worlds on worlds* in miniature.

These and such like circumstances give room for reasonable conjecture, that these bodies may be the effects of *natural accidents*; for as *all bodies* and *species of beings* are subject to accidents, so may these (as being liable also to the same fate) be forced by some accident out of their *natural orbs*, and wander into space, interfering sometimes with one *sun*, and sometimes with another: And it is strongly conjectured that at the time of the *flood* such a *comet* passed near our *earth*, and almost carried her out of her *orbit*. Nay, great accidents many times happen to the human species, which, tho' they do not *totally dissolve* the fabrick, have nevertheless so great an effect, as to put the *body* out of the *proper form* it had before; and altho' perhaps the person acts in life again in such a station as he is able, yet something of that accident is still conspicuous on him.

From what hath been said concerning *comets*, I do not attempt so strongly to interfere with
the

the *incomparable philosopher* before mention'd, as to make a *direct objection* against him, I only produce my opinion, and advance these circumstances for the speculation of the judicious reader: For there may be *some bodies*, that move in *such elliptical form* as is specified by that *excellent author*, which the *GOD of nature* may have created to such purposes as we are unacquainted with; and there may likewise be *other bodies wandering freely in space*, proceeding from the effects of *natural accidents*; which *bodies*, having a free motion by the *power of gravity*, must of necessity continue in a direct line, except they meet with another *body*, or its *power*, to attract them; which must sometimes be the case, where *many bodies* are so spread in *space*; for when such a *body* happens strongly to interfere with the *sun*, it may rationally be supposed, that the power of *attraction* must draw it into the *sun*, and when the power of *gravity* overcomes the force of *attraction*, its own *gravity* must carry it off again into *space*; and, as it is allow'd, that some of these *bodies* pass in a direct line, it must consequently sometimes happen, that by their own direct motion they fall into the *sun*; from whence it may reasonably be presumed, that many such *bodies* may have been destroy'd in so immense a *body of agitated matter*, and no more real loss incur'd thereby, than there accrues from lesser *bodies* consumed in our natural fires: Which I shall further treat of in another place. But suppose such a *body* to continue in a direct motion with an extream ve-

locity ever so long a space of time, it never could reach the *bounds of space*, and that perhaps after a long series of years it might pass *all extension of bodies*, there must nevertheless be room for its free motion in a *vacuum of space*.

Some indeed are of opinion there is no *vacuum* in *space*; but to me the contrary seems evident, for admitting there was a continual creation of *matter*, yet as *matter* began to exist in *space*, there must of necessity be *space* without *matter*.

Some again imagine *matter* to be *eternal*, and from thence conclude there is *no vacuum* in *space*; but to me such imaginations appear *absurd*, for the *essence of matter* consisting of real *substance*, it must of necessity have *began to exist*; and if *time* and *space* (as I hinted in the former part of this treatise) had consisted of *substance*, they must also have *began to exist*; but as they consist of *endless expanse* and *eternal duration*, it is impossible they should ever *begin to be*. For the *duration of time* must be *for ever*, to correspond with the *eternal being of God*; nay, suppose *God* never to have given *being to matter*, the *duration of time* must have been the same, notwithstanding it might not have been measured out by points and given measure by the motion of *bodies*, such mensuration being only a *modus* of computing or dividing *time* fit for our capacities. So likewise *space* must be *boundless*, for where no creation is, of necessity there must be *space*; and supposing the *extent of matter* to be ever so great, *space* can have *no bounds*,

bounds, as the *substance of matter* only takes up room in *space*; for if there is no real *vacuum* in *space*, yet the *expanse of boundless space* must be still the same. But, as I have already observed, there must necessarily be a *vacuum* in *space*, and the *natural essence of matter* is a self-evident demonstration, that it received its *being* from *the power of an eternal Cause*, who has power in himself, if he so wills, as to reduce it to its former *non-state*, tho' perhaps *that being* hath not decreed so to do: And according to the *natural essence of matter*, its first parts are so impenetrable, that whatever changes it may undergo, there will no *real loss* proceed therefrom, and consequently there is no natural decay in *matter*.

Whatever changes the great *Author of nature* design'd to these *planetary bodies*, or whatever *accidents* they may be subject to, there certainly will be no dissolution of *any parts of matter*, nor *loss in nature*; for, in all the different changes in bodies, *matter* still pursues some end to creation, and serves to some just purpose in nature. For if a *planet*, by a *natural accident*, become a *wanderer in space*, or should happen to be *consumed* in the *sun*, yet there would proceed no *real loss* in nature from thence; for the *parts of matter*, whereof such a *body* was composed, not being *annihilated*, but only *separated*, they would still pursue some just purposes in nature, notwithstanding all the different changes they might have undergone; for all the changes in nature consist of no more than the *separation of parts*
and

and *position of matter*: Nay, supposing there to be so great a dissolution of *bodies*, as that all *matter* should return again into its pristine *confused chaos*, yet it might not diminish *one atom of matter*.

Again, as GOD *forewill'd* in himself, by an absolute power, to give *being* to *matter*, and by *his great power* form'd it into so beautiful a creation, of which he is the sole sovereign, on whose power *all* nature depends, according to his perfect proceedings, the works of his great power may not be annihilated; for suppose the *being* of matter to be of ever so lasting duration, and at last to be reduced to its former *non-state*, there will *still* be *eternity*, in which *that great Being of designing will and power* must preside; otherwise the effects of his absolute *will* would lie hid in oblivion, except GOD *will'd* in himself a *renovation of matter*.

But these reasonings carry with them no solveable demonstration, that GOD might *will* to annihilate his own works, which *he gave being to*; only, as I before hinted, *that great designing mind* might have created the *parts of matter* of such an *impenetrable* nature, as not to dissolve again into its former *non-state*, and by that power might maintain all causes in nature eternally to come: But supposing the *first parts* of matter to be subject to a *natural decay*, yet their *great Author* might have supplied that defect, like as *just causes* in nature are succeeded by their *just effects*; and as

that

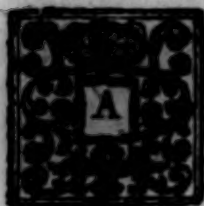
that great Cause gave being to matter by a cause external of itself, so he is absolutely powerful to create its parts utterly impenetrable. If this *phenomenous curtain* was withdrawn from before our eyes, we should perceive that beautiful machinery motion of *matter*, from whence all *causes in nature* proceed, and our minds would then be as undeceived, as when the curtain is drawn from before a curious *human-invented machine*, which before affected our eyes and minds with its *phenomena*.



of



Of the RESURRECTION.



S there appears to be in all the different changes in nature no real loss or dissolution of parts, it is an evident demonstration of the possibility in nature of the *resurrection of the body*; for supposing, as some think, an absolute necessity for the uniting the same parts at the *resurrection*, which the body was composed of at its death, and that the parts, which the body was composed of at the time of death, should be dispersed into ever so confused separation, or in the interim of time serve to any purpose in nature whatsoever, yet as there is no dissolution of parts, there is therefore a just possibility, that these parts may be join'd together again at the *resurrection*. And according to the true nature of things, when *the great Author of nature* will perfect these great designs, there is no necessity for the organized body, when join'd to the conscious part, to be again composed of the same parts; for the *sameness* in all bodies consists not in the *essence of matter*, but the *position of parts*, for in *bodies* of all kinds, and in all times of life, there is a continual

nual changeable motion of matter, so that a *body* cannot be of the *same matter* any space of time together; I say, the *sameness* of body exists in the position of its parts, for when its parts are moved to creation, which by a coherent motion of matter arrives to maturity, then it consists not of the *same parts* of matter as at the first. By which 'tis plain and obvious, that there is no absolute necessity for the same parts of matter to be join'd again to the *conscious part* of man. We believe the *conscious part* of man to act independent of the *body* after death till the *resurrection*; but supposing the contrary, there is not the least impossibility for its rising again in its former identity; like as a machine, whose parts being quite separated one from the other, and afterwards replaced in their just position, again becomes the *very same thing* it was before. Moreover, as there appears to be *no loss in nature*, or *dissolution of parts*, supposing the length of time from the first *being* of man to the *resurrection* to be ever so long, yet the just effect of the *resurrection* might be as well completed, as if the time was abundantly shorter. For notwithstanding the continual number of *bodies* that return to the earth, which are not directly taken therefrom, because seeds for propagation proceed from *bodies* themselves, yet nevertheless, according to the nicest observation, the substance of the earth consisteth of the same magnitude; because the matter of which *bodies* are composed, when laid in the earth, serves also to some just purposes in nature. From such like circumstances are founded the most obvi-

ous demonstrations, that when this earth, or any such *body*, shall undergo its *natural change*, the *resurrection of the body* may be justly effected, and not diminish her *substance*. And suppose such a *body* as we inhabit should be, by a *natural accident*, burnt up, yet as there is no *dissolution of parts*, the *resurrection of the body* may be, notwithstanding, as justly effected; for no *accident in nature* can be capable of obstructing the purposes of its *great Author*, when in his eternal decrees, and council of his own mind, he has *will'd* to effect his great designs.

F I N I S.

